



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Freedom of Movement in Moldova**

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 19, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have listened carefully to the intervention by the distinguished representative of Moldova and we have taken note of the difficulties imposed by Transnistrian authorities on OSCE mission members crossing into Transnistria. In that regard I would just like to recall that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, we informed the Permanent Council of similar constraints being imposed upon American diplomatic personnel by Transnistrian authorities. This was not an isolated incident.

Unfortunately, since then, on March 23<sup>rd</sup> a similar such incident occurred in which an accredited U.S. diplomat was denied access to the Transnistrian region when he was planning to travel to a meeting organized by a non-governmental organization. I might point out that in addition to denying the American authority entry into Transnistria, that meeting was broken up by the authorities of Transnistria, who entered the offices, tried to break down the door of the non-governmental organization, and then eventually burned the Moldovan and the OSCE flags.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, another American diplomat was refused entry by Transnistrian guards.

It's ironic to note that as our officials have been marking time at the crossing points, waiting to try to get in, Russian officials have been seen to easily breeze through the same crossing points. That's why, when we raised this issue at the last Permanent Council meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, we called on the Russian Federation to use its influence to help resolve this matter. The response we got from the distinguished Russian ambassador was a statement that he was "amazed" that we would even raise this issue.

Let me explain a few reasons why we believe it is appropriate to raise it directly with the Russian Federation. The Russian peacekeeping forces exercise de-facto control of the Transnistrian region. Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations ensures the freedom of movement for diplomats. The peacekeeping force in our view should be responsible for enforcing this provision.

Even if Russia does not accept that interpretation, the 1992 cease-fire agreement, to which the Russian Federation is a signatory, calls for the elimination of impediments on the movement of goods, services and people in the region. The peacekeeping force is charged with enforcing this agreement.

The Transnistrian region, Mr. Chairman, is not a sovereign state and has no right to block access to diplomats or to anyone else. It has been under the watch of this same peacekeeping force that the separatist regime has installed the numerous checkpoints that we are talking about, where armed individuals now deny access to our diplomats and to the OSCE mission officials.

We again call on the Russian Federation to use its influence -- and no other state in this room has the influence with the Tiraspol regime that the Russian Federation does -- to resolve this matter immediately.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.